Carpels Jorin

Is the University of Oulu a global university?

An examination of a theoretical concept and its application in textual analysis.

Master Thesis
KASVATUSTIETEIDEN TIEDEKUNTA
Education and Globalisation
2020

University of Oulu
Faculty of Education
Is the University of Oulu a global university? An examination of a theoretical concept and its application in textual analysis. (Jorin Carpels)
Master Thesis, 58 pages
May 2020

In this thesis the concept of the global university is examined and evaluated as an analytical tool by applying it to the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020. By examining the four different characteristics of this concept, the conclusion is made that it is grounded in reality. Existing research confirms the global prevalence of different modus operandi, which fall under the unified idea of the global university. Following this, the concept is converted into an analytical tool. The four characteristics are converted into categories for content analysis. This categories are applied to the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020. While only three categories are present in the strategy, it is concluded that in some ways the University of Oulu is going to operate like a global university. The global university as an analytical tool needs to be further developed to be used meaningfully in the analysis of universities.

Keywords: global, quality, strategy, university, usefulness

Contents

1 Introduction

In his 2011 article *How useful should the university be?* Gert Biesta describes the rise of the ‘global university’. The article is a very generalized description of how universities around the globe have started to operate in a specific, and very similar, way. This method of operation is based on particular notions and logic that has driven universities into a particular role in society and the economy. This article falls in line with Biesta’s previous writings about education. He is concerned about tendencies in education (e.g. learnification) and the role of education in society (Biesta 2010).

Reading the article sparked a need within me to further examine the concept. It highlighted an important issue in higher education. However, one article and an agreeing reader do not a scientific conclusion make. This is why I am writing this thesis. Biesta’s article (2011) serves both as an inspiration and a starting point to examine the concept of the ‘global university’ and its potential as a tool to evaluate particular universities. Applying the general concept to real, specific universities could prove a useful way to both examine and further the discussion on the role of universities.

The specific aims of this thesis are to :

1. define the concrete characteristics of a ‘global university’
2. identify research that supports the existence of these characteristics in higher education
3. examine how a ‘global university’ as an analytical concept contributes to our understanding of the changing nature and role of universities.

This third and final research question is broad and, as a result, not particularly useful for this kind of thesis. Given the limited scope of a master’s thesis, I will delineate this research question to be very specific:

a) How can I apply the characteristics of a ‘global unviersity’ in the analysis of the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020?
b) What conclusion(s) can be made about the University Strategy using the characteristics of the ‘global university’ as a tool of analysis?

In the section on the theoretical framework I will closely examine Biesta’s concept of the ‘global university’. I will attempt to distill specific and clear characteristics from his article.

Consequently, the second part of this section will be a concise literature study in order to (in)validate the characteristics of the 'global university'. To close off this section I will summarize the findings of this literature study and how it impacts the concept and characteristics of the 'global university'. This conclusion will answer research questions 1 and 2.

The methodology section will both concern my specific methods and how I have chosen this method based on the findings of the previous section and the aims of research questions 3.a and 3.b. This section of the thesis should be able to answer research question 3.a.

Lastly, based on the analysis and its results I will able to answer research question 3.b. The findings of these two sections will also allow me to re-evaluate the earlier answer to research question a. Given a lack of concrete results or a negative answer to research question 3.b, it would be necessary to re-examine the methodology and, consequently, the answer to research question 3.a.

All of the findings and answers to my research questions will be summarized in the conclusion of this thesis. My intention is to provide concrete and practical answers that can support future research.

2 Theoretical framework

The starting point for my theoretical framework is Biesta's (2011) article *How useful should the university be?* Biesta (2011) describes the state of higher education across the globe and the way universities are being run. As the title suggests, his discussion centers around the central question of what the role of a university is. To determine this, Biesta (2011) describes a particular modus operandi that, according to him, has become globally prevalent. To label this modus operandi and its underlying causes, he uses the term 'global university' to describe the convergence of universities internationally becoming more similar and doing similar things.

Firstly, I will summarize and dissect Biesta's (2011) article. My intention is to determine which characteristics make up the 'global university'. Given the abstract nature of Biesta's (2011) concept, this is necessary for the following section. Secondly, I will carry out a concise literature study per characteristic. The aim of this is to determine the validity of each characteristic. Using previous research I will confirm the prevalence and existence of these characteristics. Doing this, I will attempt to validate the notion of 'global university' as a collection of actual characteristics of universities around the world. This will also allow me to make those characteristics concrete and use them as categories for analysis. Lastly, I will summarize this section to provide a concise and clear overview of my theoretical framework. This overview will also allow me to clearly demonstrate my choices in the methodology section.

2.1 Biesta's 'global university'

In his article *How useful should the university be?* Biesta (2011) discusses two crises in higher education. The first crisis is the prevalent trend of reducing public funding for higher education, and the concerning nature of how this is justified by politicians and governments (Biesta 2011, p. 36). It is concerning, because those politicians and governments often present the reduction in funding "not just as *inevitable* but, more importantly, as not involving any *choice*" (Biesta 2011, p. 36). Biesta references Zygmunt Bauman in order to label this as an immoral action, since alternatives are always possible. This is especially true given recent financial crises and the subsequent bailouts of banks. Consequently, I would conclude this first crisis is political.

The second crisis is less material, and Biesta does not link it to particular persons or institutions. Instead he indicates a global trend in higher education that is not necessarily forced by governments, referring to this as "the notion of the 'global university'"(Biesta 2011, p. 37). Very briefly he explains that he "refers to the fact that more and more universities in more and more countries all seem to be playing the same game and therefore increasingly are trying to become the same and to a large extent already have become the same"(Biesta 2011, p. 37). This does not so much mean that universities are copying each other's good practices, but more that the identity and entire modus operandi of these universities are becoming the same. In fact, Biesta points out that the 'global university' is not "a particular kind of university, but highlights a particular modus operandi" (2011, p. 37). The most crucial part of this is that "the conception of a good university that underlies the idea of the global university is not based on a substantive set of values and principles but is articulated in terms of how one institution is positioned in relation to other institutions" Biesta 2011, p. 37). This statement is particularly important for this thesis, since it means there is no set of values to look for in an institution that would indicate it qualifies as a 'global university'. Instead, the qualifiers are positional. How does the university position itself with regards to other institutions, and most importantly, to other universities?

A significant part of the article (Biesta 2011, pp. 38-41) is also dedicated to the different historical conceptions of a university. I will not summarize this part of the article here, with exception of Biesta's own, and main, conclusion: The different conceptions of universities in the past "all have an orientation toward the public good. All models seem to see higher education first and foremost as a public good rather than as a provision entirely oriented toward individuals" (Biesta 2011, p. 41). As I will explain below, this shared perspective between the different conceptions seems to be missing in the 'global university'. As will become clear below, the 'global university' is not concerned with the public good, but its own function in the economy.

Based on the above observation, Biesta (2011) suggests some characteristics of what makes up a global university. First of all, he points out that "the pseudo-substantive notion of "quality" is often mobilized" (Biesta 2011, p. 37). Specifically, quality is used as a "non-objectionable, that is, a concept that it is difficult to argue against" (ibid.). It is indeed hard to argue against the desire for quality. However, this quality is never defined very well. Biesta explains that "indicators of quality have turned into definitions of quality" (2011, p. 38). He immediately links this to rankings in league tables: The position on a league table is "no longer seen as a judgment about what makes a good university, but has become the very definition of what a good university is" (ibid.). In other words, a university ranking might reflect that a university has good practices, but in the public eye it simply indicates a university is good, never mind the reason they rank highly in a particular league table. According to Biesta "it is not uncommon to see the global university defining its main strategic objective in terms of obtaining a particular position in the league table" (ibid.).

Given these ideas, I would propose two interlinked characteristics of the 'global university'. First of all, the use of non-objectionables, such as a focus on quality, which are ill-defined (or not at all defined) when employed by a university. Secondly, a strong focus on university rankings, specifically the aim to achieve a certain position as the end-goal of strategy or policy. This includes using a current ranking solely as an indicator of being a good university. To clarify, this second characteristic is the use of a current ranking or aim to achieve a ranking as a defining characteristic of a university, and not as indicator or evaluation of specific practices within a university.

Additionally, Biesta (2011) argues "the global university [is] an adaptive university, […] a university trying to adapt to the "demands" of global capitalism, the "logic" of the market, economic realities, the needs of students, and so on" (p. 41). The main compass for the university becomes "private interests" (Biesta 2011, p. 42), and it thus "positions itself in an economic relationship" becoming a "provider and its clientele […] the consumer" (ibid.). This is why the earlier conclusion about the historical conceptions of universities is rather important: before, universities were mostly imagined as an institution which served the greater, public, good. Whereas now, the 'global university' is imagined as an institution which serves the individual and private interests. Universities are conceived of as providers of goods and services, rather than centers of learning and knowledge. Related to this is the aspect that a 'global university' wants to show "it is better than its competitors [which] is to be understood in a comparative way, not a substantive one" (Biesta 2011, p. 42). In other words, a 'global university' aims to be better than other universities, but not different per se. The notion of a 'global university' means many universities aim to do the same things, but better than the others, the underlying logic being competition. This replaces the aim to provide education and produce knowledge in the fields that the university is good at.

The arguments presented above lead me to describe one more characteristic of the 'global university: The university as a participant in the market economy, and logically as a competitor in the economy. This means a 'global university' is focused on being 'better than' and being useful, which in economic terms means profitable.

Following this Biesta (2011) also discusses the relationship between the university and the student. He admits it is possible to see this relationship "as an economic transaction, in which the student is a customer and the educator or educational institution a provider" (Biesta 2011, p. 43). This comes with a strong criticism, that teaching may become impossible in such a situation, since it denies "the very possibility that a teacher will not simply give you what you already know you want, but may actually give you something […] that exceeds or transcends your expectations" (ibid.). In this sense, by adapting fully to students' needs or demands the university "runs the risk of becoming un- if not anti-educational" (ibid.). Whether or not this judgment is accurate, we can summarize that the 'global university' is also focused on providing certain goods or services to the student, which would be comparably better than those provided by other universities. Instead of providing education, whether or not it meets the expectations of students, it must provide a useful product.

The characteristic to derive from these observations is the university as a provider of goods and services for students. This characteristic is relational and, more importantly, transactional. It is a positional characteristic, one relative to other universities and to students or, perhaps more aptly, customers. The 'global university' wants to attract students by providing what the individual student wants and expects, instead of providing education that exceeds expectations and is hence potentially transformative. It is oriented "first and foremost toward private issues" (Biesta 2011, p. 45).

Before I summarize this section it is important to note one last remark made by Biesta:

> "The rise of the global university is a process that permeates what happens in universities all over the world in ways that are less visible, that are more akin to an emergent logic of partly unintended consequences of actions of a wide range of actors, even actions that, at first sight, seem to be informed by a wish to take care of the university and even shield it from attacks from the "outside"." (2011, p. 45)

This means that a 'global university' might not be visible at first sight. It means that one university might only contain traces of the 'global university' while another might be fully permeated by its logic. As such this has an important impact on how I will proceed. First of all, it is important to now validate these issues and characteristics as existing trends or characteristics of actual universities. For this, I will turn to existing research. Secondly, it will have an impact on the methodology of this thesis, which I will discuss in the methodology section of this thesis.

Before we move on to existing research it is necessary to summarize the proposed characteristics. I will list them in the same order as above, which more or less follows the order of Biesta's (2011) article.

1. The university employs the term quality as a 'non-objectionable': A value and idea that is hard to argue against, but which is not or ill-defined when used. Other non-objectionables may also be used.
2. The university focuses on achieving or maintaining a certain position or ranking in league tables or comparative rankings. Specifically it uses a current ranking or aim to achieve a ranking as a defining characteristic of a university, and not as an indicator or evaluation of specific practices within a university.
3. The university behaves or positions itself as a participant in the market economy, becoming a competitor with other universities. Usefulness, profitability and being 'better than' become strategic aims of the university.
4. The university is a provider of goods and services for students. The relationship between the university and the student is transactional, not educational. The student becomes a customer and the university a competitive business.

These four characteristics are closely related and interlinked. I will maintain a separation between the four for practical reasons. It allows me to establish clear and practical categories which can be (in)validated and consequently used for analysis. Having separate categories makes it possible to find research which clearly answers the question: does this phenomenon exist or is it simply a theorized characteristic by Biesta. Examining these characteristics separately is crucial, because it will have specific impact on my methodology. It will also determine whether I can truly employ the term '*global* university' or if it is a much more confined phenomenon. This discussion will be elaborated upon in the next section of this chapter.

2.2 What the research says: global trends in universities

The aim of this section is to determine the validity of the characteristics of the 'global university'. Biesta's (2011) article does not provide a lot of evidence to support his claims, which makes it necessary to verify his observations through other existing research. If all these characteristics can be verified as existing phenomena, it would become possible to claim that the 'global university' is a valid concept, and can be used for analysis. To avoid relativism I assume that the existence of these phenomena can be proven if substantial evidence is provided by previous research. If there is very little research available on one of these phenomena, it would be difficult to claim that it is a hallmark of a 'global university'. It would also call into question what Biesta (2011) based his article on, if very little research exists on these topics.

2.2.1 Characteristic 1: Use of quality (or other qualifiers) as non-objectionable

For this category I will review selected literature on the use of 'quality' in policy for and by universities around the globe. Given the limited length of a thesis, I will not cover every region with this literature review, but attempt to demonstrate a global tendency in general. Additionally, I will try to examine how quality is defined in these articles and by the institutions in question. At the end of this short review I confirm or adapt the above definition of this characteristic according to my findings.

In her PhD thesis, Taina Saarinen (2007) extensively discusses the use of the word 'quality' in higher education policy in Europe and Finland. When discussing the concept of quality, she points out that "it seems that quality is mostly taken for granted" and "unsurprisingly, presented as a self-evident good that everybody wants. Simultaneously, quality is rarely defined" (Saarinen 2007, p. 61). This reinforces the idea the Biesta proposes, that 'quality' is mostly used as a hollow "non-objectionable" (2011, p. 38). Of course, Saarinen's discussion is more extensive and presents a more complex understanding of the 'quality' discourse. Since quality rarely has a meaning on its own in policy texts it "receives meaning by the operationalisations attached to it" (Saarinen 2007, p. 61). In other words, 'quality' has no meaning, besides 'being something desirable', until it becomes part of a process, something that is being done in the interest of 'quality'.

In some cases, "quality is presented as "sick", and in need for care" (Saarinen 2007, p. 62). Saarinen concludes that those who talk about quality in this way have particular concerns, and she points out that "the dominant values seem to be those of the economy, competition, and regulation" (2007, p. 62). In addition, "it could be argued that […] quality is a production virtue, controlled by the administrative sections of the academe" and "that quality assurance was introduced more as a regulatory device for the process of production rather than as a check on the quality of the product itself" (Saarinen 2007, p. 62). This suggests a view on quality as a means of control or governance (Foucault 2002, pp. 220-221) over what is being done, rather than being a measure of what is being achieved. Or as Biesta puts it "quality assurance is about efficiency and effectiveness of processes, not about what these processes are supposed to bring about" (2010, p. 54), rightfully raising the issue of finding out what 'quality' is supposed to be for. If it has no meaning on its own, 'quality education' might as well just be called 'education', and no one will argue that education is not needed.

This is why it is important to be reminded that "'quality' became a keyword of higher education policies in the 1980s and 1990s" (Saarinen 2005, p. 191) and in the early 2000s the use of the word 'quality' in the Bologna process increases "significantly over the years, both absolutely and proportionately in relation to the total number of words in the documents" (Saarinen 2005, p. 200). And again this comes with the observation that "the meaning of quality is ambiguous and loaded with stakeholder interests" (Saarinen 2005, p. 193). This stresses the importance of paying attention to the use of the word 'quality' in any discourse related to higher education, or within higher education institutions.

In Australia, a similar use of 'quality' has been observed. Research notes that since the 1980s "'quality talk' became prominent in educational discourses" (Vidovich 2001, p. 249). Vidovich (2001) also states that "multiple and contradictory quality discourses have coexisted" (p. 249) but this has not led to a diminished use of 'quality' as a focus of policy. The researcher classifies quality discourses under three principal labels: "'excellent standards', 'quality assurance' (QA), 'quality improvement' (QI)" (Vidovich 2001, p. 250). Excellent standards and QI discourses both seem to focus on inputs and outputs, while QA discourses are more concerned with "processes or procedures more than outcomes" (Vidovich 2001, p. 250). This is almost verbatim what Biesta (2011) writes about quality assurance. Vidovich's (2001) research leads to the conclusion that these, sometimes contradictory, discourses all share "an overall trends towards [...] delivering greater power to the Commonwealth over universities" (p. 259). The researcher provides two explanations for the different coexisting discourses on 'quality' in higher education policy in Australia. The first is that quality is hard to define and policymakers struggle to deal with this fact. The second explanation, which is also the one most explored in this article is that policymakers choose from "a menu of quality discourses" (Vidovich 2001, p. 259) in order to maintain or increase government control of universities. Additionally, "between the early 1990s and the early 2000s, quality policy was reconstructed from a managerial device [...] to a marketing device suitable for launching 'Brand Australia' higher education to overseas customers" (Vidovich 2001, p. 260). Vidovich (2001) also relates this to the shift of higher education towards becoming an economic good. Again, I would like to point out that this relates to Biesta's (2011) observation, that the use of 'quality' is not so much concerned with quality itself, but rather that it is a useful tool to drive policy and decision making in a certain direction.

The prominence of concern over quality within higher education is supported by an article written by Becket & Brookes (2008). They examine the different quality management practices that are being used in higher education institutions. They reviewed papers published between 1996 and 2006 in order to examine how quality is being managed (Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 41). They claim that the research they examine comes “from all corners of the globe” (Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 41), i.e. Australia, the UK, India, the USA, Romania and Hong Kong. South-America and Africa are not represented by the examples given by the authors. The references of the article confirm that these areas of the globe are not represented in the examined papers. They motivate the usefulness of this measurement by stressing that “the role of HE in stimulating national economic growth and the value of international students to national economies exacerbates the need to ensure quality within HE” (Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 40) as well as “higher education for the masses and a growing climate of increased accountability” and “greater expectations and diversity of students as consumers” (ibid.). They clearly link quality and quality management to economy and business, noting that students are changing into consumers of higher education. The paper doesn’t question the need to manage quality, but simply demonstrates that it is happening on a global scale, for the reasons cited above. This makes the paper a good argument to confirm that concern over quality is a phenomenon within higher education institutions in Europe, North America and some parts of Asia. In addition to this, the article provides a counter-narrative by attempting to define ‘quality’, which more critical articles claim doesn’t actually happen, or only vaguely. This articles shows that there actually are attempts to define quality. Of course, we must keep Vidovich’s (2001) conclusions in mind, that multiple definitions could simply mean a greater range of tools for decision makers.

Becket & Brookes (2008) also discuss the difficulties of quality management in higher education. They mention that those involved in this process usually interpret ‘quality’ in different ways, to the extent that these interpretations can contradict each other (p. 41). They do not call into question the usefulness of managing quality in higher education but rather the management itself. They examine the different existing stakeholders involved with this management and make two major distinctions: external and internal stakeholders (Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 41) They discern external stakeholders who are “concerned with quality assurance procedures” (Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 41) which are needed to ensure the delivery of adequate product or service. They summarize these procedures as “quality ‘As’ – accountability, audit and assessment” (Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 41). This partially supports Biesta’s claim that quality is concerned with procedures. However, the paper also discusses internal stakeholders, who are more concerned with the education aspect of higher education. They summarize this focus with the term “quality enhancement”, which exists out of “quality ‘Es’: empowerment, enthusiasm, expertise and excellence” (Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 42). The second reason for the challenge of managing quality is “the complicated nature of the educational product” (ibid.). Again, quality is linked to an economical interpretation of what higher education provides. Becket and Brooks explain that “quality in HE is a multi-dimensional construct which is interpreted in different ways by diverse stakeholders” (Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 43). In other words, quality in HE is different depending on who you ask about it. However, they provide one explicit set of definitions, which can prove useful for the methodology of this thesis. The definitions are these:

- quality as exceptional (for example, high standards)
- quality as consistency (for example, zero defects)
- quality as fitness for purpose (fitting customer specifications)
- quality as value for money (as efficiency and effectiveness)
- quality as transformative (an ongoing process that includes empowerment to take action and enhancement of customer satisfaction)

(Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 43)

Again, the economical and business-like aspects of higher education return in relation to quality. The article concludes that there are many higher education institutions that are using disparate practices and are not working together to find a holistic way to achieve good quality management (Becket & Brookes 2008, p. 47). This again seems to support Biesta’s claim that quality isn’t a concrete phenomenon in higher education policy and strategy, but rather a term which meaning is filled in depending on the stakeholders and who’s involved in the discussion. In his paper, Biesta (2011) mentions ‘excellent’ as well, as something that universities are striving to become, without thinking about what exactly it entails (p. 37). The fact that this term shows up in relation to quality management seems to indicate that ‘excellent’ or ‘excellence’ could also be considered a non-objectionable. Based on the above discussed research, excellence and quality are closely linked together.

The term ‘quality assurance’ returns in a paper on higher education policy in Hong Kong (Mok 2005). Specifically, the researcher finds that “the more flexibility and autonomy that institutions obtain and enjoy, the more review and quality assurance exercises are implemented to assure high quality and to uphold the notion of "accountability""(Mok 2005, p. 299). This is then linked to the corporatization of higher education and the focus on "'effectiveness', 'efficiency' and 'economy' […] as the primary criteria for assessment" (Mok 2005, p. 299**)**. This research explicitly links two characteristics of the global university: the focus on quality and higher education institutions as business. The researchers explains "that higher education institutions [in Hong Kong] are now run and governed, like business or market-like entities" (Mok 2005, p. 299).

Rhoades & Sporn (2002) examine the ways in which quality assurance methods have been adopted from the US in Europe, with a focus on Austria and Germany. They note that quality assurance has been around in the U.S.A. since the "formation of accrediting bodies […] in the late 1800s" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 359). They observe that "quality assurance began in the U.S. [sic] as a self-regulatory activity organized by non-governmental associations" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 360). Both self-evaluation as evaluation by clients exist within the quality assurance tradition in the U.S.A. However, since the 1990s "evaluation of academic work is increasingly being done by non-academic professionals" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 362). This is linked with a tradition of strategic planning, which "involved and extended quality assurance practices" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 363). Later in the paper Rhoades & Sporn explain that quality assurance processes as mostly market driven. The motivation for this is that "the private sector […] is seen as more efficient than the public sector" and the pressure from governments to spend money efficiently, as well as increased "reference to higher education's role in promoting the country's global economic competitiveness" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 367). As to the meaning of 'quality assurance' itself, in the U.S.A. "quality assurance […] has never been taken to mean a high standard of comparable quality across institutions" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 376). The first reason for this is the regional nature of accrediting associations and that their aim has been "that all [HEIs] meet a minimal level of quality" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 376). On a state level the focus "has been on ensuring the more efficient use of public resources" and productivity (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 376). The researchers link this to the "general sense that private sector entities are more efficient than public ones" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 376). Additionally, another influence from the private sector has resulted in "policy makers talking about students (and business employers) as "customers" of the university" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 377) which has led to satisfaction surveys serving as "the basis of assessing the quality of universities' work" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 377). To summarize, in the US quality assurance is mostly market driven and strongly related to a business perspective of higher education institutions, including considering students as customers.

In comparison, quality assurance in Europe emerged "as early as the mid-1980s" and was "related to limitations of public expenditures and demands for greater accountability in higher education" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 363). From the mid-1990s onward, quality becomes more and more prominent in European higher education, because of efforts from the European Commission (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 364). The meaning of quality assurance in Europe has been different compared to the U.S.A.: " in the context of the EU, quality assurance has come to mean the assurance of equivalent quality across countries" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 378). It also "mainly concerns internal assessment" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 379). The researchers indicate that "it is also not yet clear how quality indicators will be (and are) used at the institutional level" (Rhoades & Sporn 2002, p. 379). In other words, in Europe quality assurance is meant to achieve a minimum level of quality across European higher education, while, at the same time, it isn't known how the institutions themselves are assessing their own quality. Based on this paper, few conclusions can be reached on how 'quality' is being used in European higher education. However, it is clear that it is being used within institutional planning and strategy.

Deem, Mok & Lucas (2008) explore the transformation of higher education in Europe and Asia, based on the concept of the 'World-Class' University. They note that 'world-class university' "has become a concept much invoked by governments and also by universities themselves in many countries and is an idea now firmly embedded in higher education policies and strategies" (Deem et al. 2008, p. 84). More importantly, they point out the fact that everyone wants to be 'world-class', while no one seems to really know what being 'world-class' entails or how to become it. The researchers mention a few attempts at defining a 'world-class university', but those mostly collapse into achieving a good international ranking and being competitive (Deem et al. 2008, p. 94). I mention this research here, because 'world-class' certainly appears to be a non-objectionable like 'quality'. It is a desirable trait for a university, that intuitively no one would object against, while also being vague enough that it can be used as a motivator for particular policy or strategic aims. As Deem et al. put it so well: "The meaning of the concept is then somewhat fluid, dependent on the context" (Deem et al. 2008, p. 85). Even Biesta mentions 'world-class' and 'excellent' as two descriptors that universities are striving to obtain around the globe (2011, p. 37). Clearly 'world-class' also serves the function as non-objectionable. It is extremely desirable to become world-class, even though it is unclear what exactly that is supposed to mean.

Based on this literature review, it is not unreasonable to conclude that ‘quality’ is a prominent subject in higher education around the world. Research shows that in Europe (Deem et al. 2008; Rhoades & Sporn 2002; Saarinen 2005, 2007), the U.S.A (Rhoades & Sporn 2002), Australia (Vidovich 2001), Asia (Deem et al. 2008; Mok 2005), and even globally (Becket & Brookes 2008) quality is used in policy and strategy planning of higher education institutions. The prevalence of quality (or similar non-objectionables) is unmistakenly global. In addition to this it is also clear that almost everywhere, the meaning of quality (or related terms) is either vague or directly tied to economic goals and business perspectives on higher education.

Lastly, we have found some definitions of quality and other cases of non-objectionables. These will be revisited in the methodology chapter, when defining the analytical categories.

2.2.2 Characteristic 2: University Rankings

As with the previous category, my aim is to (in)validate university rankings as a global trend. In this case few would disagree with the statement that there is a global trend with regards to chasing or focusing on global university rankings. However, for the sake of scientific rigor, I will still examine existing research about this phenomenon.

O’ Connell (2015) remarks that Global University Rankings (GURs) are potentially narrowing the focus of “research practices and strategies through greater research funding concentration, increasing tendency, internationally, to publish in English language journals and in publications included in citation databases favoured by global rankings” (p. 280). Her research focuses on the U.K.. It also shows that “rankings are shaping management and policy discourse amongst research-intensive higher education institutions and creating material effects” (O’ Connell 2015, p. 291). She also notes that this is not a deterministic effect and that alternative narratives are developing to government policies. This is mostly done by institutions who are disadvantaged by the discourse surrounding GURs (O’ Connell 2015, p. 291-292).

Ellen Hazelkorn has written extensively about GURs. In one of her articles she lists two major effects of the rise of GURs (2014). They “demonstrate how globalization has transformed higher education into a marketable commodity” (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 13) while “the attention that policymakers now give to rankings suggests they are much more about geopolitical positioning” (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 14). Secondly, “they have become the de facto gauge of excellence [which] reflects the fact that quality and excellence are the key drivers impacting and affecting higher education, both nationally and globally" (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 14). Her first point coincides with Biesta's (2011) claim that "indicators of quality have become definitions of quality" (p. 38) which he mentions in one breath with the fact that a global university commonly focuses on improving their ranking.

As underlying cause of the rise of GURs and the focus of policy makers on higher education institutions Hazelkorn (2014) briefly references the new perception that HEIs are "the principal provider of human capital through education and training, as well as the primary source of new knowledge", in addition to "many developed countries […] coming under demographic pressure" such as "graying of their populations" and "postponement of childbirth", accelerated by "the global financial crisis that began in 2008" (p. 15). Because of this, GURs came as a welcome tool to shape policy on HEIs, in both developed and developing countries (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 15). Additionally, Hazelkorn (2014) references her own research pointing out that an overwhelming amount "of university leaders desire to be among the top 10% of HEIs nationally, and […] the top 25% internationally; more than 50% said they had a formal process for reviewing their institutional positions, as a result of which 63% took strategical, organizational, managerial, or academic action"(p. 20).

In a report by the Washington D.C. based Institute for Higher Education Policy (Sanoff, Usher, Savino, & Clarke 2007), it is noted that rankings came at a time "as the consumer movement in America was reaching full flower" (p. 20). The success of university rankings in the U.S.A. is related to the high cost of a college education and thus the need for prospective students to be able to reliably pick a university that will meet their demands and expectations. The author clearly relegates the role of rankings to be a sort of catalogue, stating that "they wanted value for their money" (Sanoff et al. 2007, p. 20), 'they' being the parents of prospective students. But "not consumers alone […] have helped fuel the success of the rankings" (Sanoff et al. 2007, p. 20). The authors note that universities and colleges have used the rankings for their own gain as well, using it for marketing purposes. Nowadays, universities and colleges use the ranking for measurement themselves, "for internal benchmarking and to see how they compare to other institutions" or "to see whether they have met the goals they have set for their administrations" (Sanoff et al. 2007, p. 21). For non-academic individuals, the rankings are simply an easy way to assess a university, whether the rankings are accurate or not.

The editor of this report notes in the summary that "rankings are increasingly being used as a measure of quality" (Sanoff et al 2007, p. 6) while also noting what quality those rankings indicate can differ wildly. In other words, in the U.S.A. university rankings are clearly an important matter to higher education institutions, as they help students chose a particular university to attend and can be used a simple way to demonstrate 'quality', even if that particular quality isn't immediately clear from the ranking itself.

Lim & Oerberg (2017) researched the impact on and connection between rankings and higher education policy on a national scale. They found that, in India, the government "let a ranking debate take off both in media and the policy community at the point in which rankings seemed to serve its own policy goals of reforming a sector that was seen to be underperforming" (Lim & Oerberg 2017, p. 21). The Indian government does this to promote the ideal of the world-class university (Lim & Oerberg 2017, p. 21). This push for being 'world-class' has also been noted in South Korea and Hong Kong (Byun, Jon, & Kim 2013; Mok 2005), which is a concept that is strongly centered around GURs. Additionally, "the THE […] continues to aim to be part of policy processes" (Lim & Oerberg 2017, p. 22). Lim & Oerberg (2017) warn that ranking instruments and their use in national policy must be examined carefully, because rankings might have grown beyond simple 'tools' (p. 22). There clearly is a consensus among researchers that university rankings have a significant and important impact on higher education policy. This means that those rankings have serious impact on universities themselves as well, since national policy is influenced by those rankings.

As Marginson (2007) puts it: "now the rankings genie is out of the bottle it will always be with us" (p. 132) . Rankings seem inescapable for both institutions as well as policymakers. It is becoming impossible, and possibly foolish, for anyone involved in higher education to ignore global university rankings and their impact on policy, student choice, and stakeholder interests. As a result I would conclude that this second characteristic is a valid one as well. University rankings are most definitely global and noticeably present in higher education policy and strategy. It is also tied to the next categories, which will now be examined.

2.2.3 Characteristic 3: The university as a participant in the market economy

In a study on the corporatization of higher education Lee Parker (2012) discusses the growing focus of universities on finances, and the occurrence of New Public Management (NPM) ideas in their planning (p. 247). He found that "despite regional and national differences, both public and private universities are found to exhibit a global trend towards operating as predominantly market funded commercial organizations" (Parker 2012, p. 247). The context provided for this observation is the more general “transformation of the public sector by New Public Management” (2012, 247). And the main reason given by Parker for the rise of NPM is reduced government spending and funding in the public sector (Parker 2012, p. 249).

Another important observation made by Parker (2012) is the use of “’globalisation’ and ‘internationalisaton’” in strategies and objectives to justify certain goals and actions:

> “This language can act:
>
> • as a rationale for organisational changes the CEO wishes to introduce
>
> • as a socially acceptable code for commercial objectives
>
> • as an explanator [sic] for competitive responses to other universities’ market strategies
>
> • as a means of communicating with government and business.” (p. 251)

According to Parker (2012), universities have become service providers with two goals: “building a cadre of workers for the global knowledge economy, and generating contributions to national economic growth” (p. 263). He concludes the article by pointing out that financial management has become central in university decision making, but also has become a goal in and of itself (Parker 2012, p. 263).

Zhang and O’Halloran (2013) examined “the evolution of the website of the National University of Singapore (NUS)” (p. 469). This university aims for the image of an “’entrepreneurial world-class university’” (Zhang and O’Halloran 2013, p. 469). They remark that certain “terms [are] ‘imported’ from the corporate world such as *enterprise* and *entrepreneurship* [which] have come to play a central role in higher education” (Zhang and O’Halloran 2013, p. 469). Of course, marketization of higher education is more than a change in language. The university’s website shifts from representing a traditional university towards “a global knowledge enterprise” (Zhang and O’Halloran 2013, p. 482). More importantly, there are “subtle shifts of marketing strategies from promoting university education as concrete products and services to a type of lifestyle and experience” (Zhang and O’Halloran 2013, p. 483). This follows “similar shifts […] in mainstream advertising discourses” (Zhang and O’Halloran 2013, p. 482).To summarize, this particular university is using its website to frame itself more and more like a commercial entity, even going as far as following advertising trends from traditionally commercial products. Going by the website, education isn't even a product anymore, but some sort of lifestyle or experience.

In Kenya, marketization of higher education has had different effects, according to Wangenge-Ouma (2008). Kenyan universities have started attracting "full fee-paying students" (p. 460), students who pay enrollment themselves instead of government subsidized students. Universities in Kenya organize "parallel programmes" for these students, which "were primarily introduced for purposes of generating critical additional revenue for public universities" (Wangenge-Ouma 2008, p. 460). It's a trend that originates in Uganda, and has spread to "several African countries, such as Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia" (Wangenge-Ouma 2008, p. 460). Besides this, Kenyan universities also remedy the lack of funding through other means: "formation of university owned for-profit companies, co-ventures with private proprietary non-university institutions, farming, [and] petty trade" (Wangenge-Ouma 2008, p. 460). Another conclusion from the researcher is that because of "the ongoing programmatic isomorphisms, […] all the universities now offer similar programmes, beyond their core areas of strength" (Wangenge-Ouma 2008, p. 469). The above findings seem to be supported by Munene (2008) who notes that "commercialization of learning was extensive and entailed the privatization of academic programmes through the admission of privately sponsored students alongside state sponsored ones" (p. 15). So clearly, in Kenya, there is a strong trend of universities adopting business strategies and commercializing themselves. For the most part this seems motivated by a lack of public funding.

In India a similar trend has been noted by Gupta (2018): "The universities that were entrusted the responsibility of 'nation building' have been deeply influenced by the market ideology" (p. 6). Because of marketization, "higher education has transformed from a 'public good' to a 'consumable good'" (Gupta 2018, p. 6). In other words, in India, higher education has become a practical choice, with students choosing for training or education that leads to faster or easier employment. The researcher blames universities in India for being interested only in commercial and financial success, rather than the educational process (Gupta 2018, p. 6).

In Europe and the U.S.A. higher education has also been focusing on marketization, as noted by Slaughter and Cantwell (2012). However, this has not happened simultaneously, or similarly. Europe's academic capitalism "has developed rapidly, often through state-let initiatives using technologies developed in the US [sic] but reengineered as uniquely European" (Slaughter and Cantwell 2012, p. 603). This was caused by a desire to compete with higher education in the U.S.A., especially in the area of STEM. However, the researchers note that there has been a shift within the European Union, "in which higher education will used [sic] to promote "stability" and "sustainability" throughout the EU" (Slaughter and Cantwell 2012, p. 603). This is contrasted by previous policy, which focused on competition. Nevertheless, commercialization of higher education exists in both the European Union and the U.S.A. for the moment, and it is not clear if this is something that will change anytime soon.

Given the research reviewed above, it is clear that higher education around the globe is becoming commercialized. Universities are acting more and more as some form of business, which is aimed at creating or increasing sources of income. In some cases this is the result of decreased public funding, in others because marketization has become a rooted idea in the higher education of a certain region. Given these facts, it is possible to conclude that the third category of the global university is also a valid one. This also makes it more likely that the fourth and last characteristic will have its merit as well , since commodification of higher education is strongly related to academic capitalism, as already noted in some research above.

2.2.4 Characteristic 4: Student and university as customer and business

Parker (2012) also observed that NPM is a "style of management that reflects a user-pays, value-for-money philosophy pursued via output focused accountability and controls, and market based competition" (p. 247). This is a first indication that Category 3 and 4 are strongly related. As might become clearer to the reader below, the line between categories 3 and 4 is a fine one and sometimes not entirely distinguishable. I would like to maintain the divide between the two. I find there is a meaningful difference, since category 3 concerns how a university behaves within an economic market and towards other businesses and institutions in that market. Category 4 concerns the explicit perspective of universities towards their students. Both of these categories concern business-like behavior of universities, but towards two completely different actors. That is why I will maintain these categories as explicitly different.

Hazelkorn (2014) mentions that many indicators used to construct university rankings "correlate strongly with wealth" (p. 21), which has "encouraged universities to escalate recruitment of elites and high achievers" (p. 21) in turn increasing selectivity when it comes to recruiting and accepting new students. This selectivity is based on if they "are more likely to have good completion rates and employability prospects, […] to ensure a better position in the rankings" (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 21). As is indicated by the EACEA (Education and Youth Policy Analysis Unit in the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency) funding of Finnish higher education is partially based on the completion of ECTS and degrees ("Finland: Higher Education Funding" 2020). More than likely, this funding model enhances the above described effect of university rankings.

I argue that both Hazelkorn's (2014) and Parker's (2012) observations are linked to one particular phenomenon: the commodification of higher education. Below I attempt to examine several studies about this phenomenon around the globe. This demonstrates the global nature of this trend.

In the UK students have started identifying themselves as consumers in relation to their higher education institutions (Tomlinson 2016, p. 164). However, the same study also shows that this identification is not absolute: students distance themselves "from consumerist notions with an acknowledgement that this does not fully capture their relationship to their institutions" (Tomlinson 2016, p. 164). Tomlinson (2016) argues that the idea of consuming higher education is a top-down phenomenon, originating from policy and marketing by the government and institutions themselves. He makes a point of warning that universities are proliferating this "service-user ethic" themselves through their "explicit marketing and consumer-driven discourses" (Tomlinson 2016, p. 165). Tomlinson (2016) also remarks that the marketization of education is changing the perspective of students on higher education. Higher education is becoming an investment that has to pay off afterwards, meaning that universities are more scrutinized by prospective students in a similar way that other expensive products and services are.

In Finland there is also a shift towards so-called 'academic capitalism' (Kauppinen & Kaidesoja 2014). At the same time this shift is not as absolute as the country of comparison, the U.S.A., specifically because of an absence of tuition fees (Kauppinen & Kaidesoja 2014, p. 37). This observation has become outdated however. Even the University of Oulu now charges tuition fees for non-EU/EEA citizens ("Scholarships and Fees" 2019). When Kauppinen & Kaidesoja (2014) wrote their article, they indicated there has been an intention to integrate higher education more closely into the global knowledge economy, by "softening boundaries between private and public sector" (p. 37). The authors make a point that this shift is a process, and does not mean Finland will end up with exactly the same kind of higher education system as the US, or that academic capitalism will become similarly central to higher education (Kauppinen &

Kaidesoja 2014, p. 37). Since tuition fees have been instituted for a limited part of the student body, it would be reasonable to assume that the shift towards academic capitalism has continued since 2014. While the tuition fees are limited to non-EU/EEA students, it seems more likely now that these tuition fees might be extended to EU/EEA and even Finnish students at some point.

Naidoo (2003) highlights the shift to "neo-liberal market mechanisms and new managerialist principles" (p. 250). For example, he points out that the World Trade Organisation has pushed higher education institutions toward being a part of a global knowledge economy, and is undercutting "the power and control of academics over knowledge production and reproduction" (Naidoo 2003, p. 250). As a result higher education is becoming " a global service operating mainly on the basis of economic considerations" (Naidoo 2003, p. 250).

Miller (2010) examines the use of the word commodification to describe higher education as it "has become widely adopted as part of the higher education lexicon" (p. 199). He argues that commodification can be considered in three ways: the provision of credentials, the provision of saleable skills, and the provision of a consumer experience. For him, the discussion is not about whether higher education wants "to be sellers […] but what it is exactly we want to sell" (Miller 2010, p. 205). This is based on his observation that all forms of commodification can be found in the UK higher education system.

Alternatively, Molesworth, Nixon & Scullion (2009) examine the marketization of higher education through a lens of 'having' and 'being'. These two verbs are used to contrast two attitudes towards education: 'having' referring to the desire to obtain and own a degree, 'being' referring to being a learner and being part of a transformative process (Molesworth, Nixon & Scullion 2009, p. 278). They argue that adopting "a market orientation – a *having* mode - must satisfy the desire of the student customers" (Molesworth et al. 2009, p. 285). The language used to describe this market perspective on higher education centers around education as "skills to acquire, 'things' to possess" (Molesworth et al. 2009, p. 278). Molesworth et al. don't necessarily bring strong arguments about the continued marketization of higher education, but they do lend an insight into the language that is associated with this trend. This will be useful for the analysis later in this thesis.

2.2.5 Global trends in higher education: the global university confirmed

The aim of the above review was to provide substantial evidence for the existence of the characteristics of Biesta's (2011) 'global university' and thus substantiate his observations and diagnosis of higher education as a whole. In other words, it was intended to validate the concept of the 'global university' as a whole, by examining its separate parts. As demonstrated above, the four different characteristics have been observed on a global scale. Further research could do an even more extensive and thorough review to find out whether these four characteristics haven't already been observed (possibly by separate researchers) within one institution. However, this kind of review is not within the scope of this thesis.

Having confirmed the existence of these four tendencies, it will be possible to establish four analytical categories that I can use to examine the current University of Oulu Strategy. In the next chapter I will revisit some concepts that have already been mentioned above in order to make clear my thought process and the approach I will take in my analysis. To avoid redundancy, I will not rephrase the four characteristics again here, but I will explicitly use and adapt them in the methodology chapter.

To conclude, I will stop using quotation marks when mentioning the concept of the global university. Up until this point of the thesis, the concept was still tenuous. It could be argued that the concept was an idea of one researcher, but not supported by research. Above I have demonstrated the contrary, thus rendering the concept of the global university concrete and realistic. Beyond this point I will no longer discuss the validity of the concept itself. Instead, I will now explore its potential as a tool or point of origin for the analysis of a university strategy.

3 Methodology

Up until this point I have been describing the concept of a global university and the different characteristics it consists of. The choice to divide the concepts up into characteristics was practical, as explained before, but was also a conscious choice with regards to methodology. Having a broad concept with a concrete definition does not necessarily translate into an easy analytical tool. On the other hand, having a concept that consists of several characteristics allows me to use this concept as a tool to analyze texts and phenomena. I can use the different characteristics as categories and look within a text for phenomena and concepts that fit within these categories. Using those results I can then link back to the overarching concept: the global university. The aim is to observe if and to what extent the text fits within the concept of the global university. Since my data consists of only one text and this concept is not easily quantifiable, the methodology is qualitative and interpretative. First and foremost my goal is to find out how I can use these characteristics of the global university as an analytical tool, and only secondarily what this tells me about the University of Oulu itself. The main purpose is therefore not to establish whether the University of Oulu is a global university or not, but to explore the analytical potential of a 'global university' as a concept.

3.1 Content analysis as research methodology

I have chosen content analysis as my methodology because it "is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff 2004, p. 18). What I am most interested in is how the concept of a global university can be used for analysis, in this case, of a text. The experiment is in using the concept as analytical framework and reaching a conclusion about the framework itself and ideally about the text or what it says about the University of Oulu. The next step in further research would be to refine or reform this framework in to a fully usable and replicable analytical method. While I aim for replicability, this is not the primary concern of my research.

The choice for content analysis is motivated by the nature of the context that I have chosen for this study. This context is the concept of the global university. Since this concept consists of several characteristics, it lends itself perfectly as a framework for content analysis. In addition to this, if the results prove meaningful, this categorical approach might prove to be more easily replicable. In short, the choice is pragmatic.

For the most part I also agree with Krippendorff's (2004) epistemological observations regarding content analysis. First of all that texts (of any kind) have a plethora of meanings depending on who is reading them. The researcher cannot claim that they are producing a more or less valid reading of a text, but simply one that is more structured and explicit (p. 19). Explicit, above all, because it must be clear how the researcher comes to a certain understanding of a text. In this case, it must be absolutely clear to the reader how I come to my conclusion, otherwise my analysis is easily dismissible. Second of all, Krippendorff (2004) gives six features of text that I agree with to a large extent. I list these features below here:

1. Texts have no objective – that is, no reader-independent – qualities;
2. Texts do not have single meanings;
3. The meanings invoked by texts need not be shared;
4. Meanings (contents) speak to something other than the given texts;
5. Texts have meanings relative to particular contexts, discourses, or purposes;
6. The nature of text demands that content analysts draw specific inferences from a body of texts to their chosen context.

(pp. 22-25)

I will clarify these features within the context of my own research. Concerning the first three features: the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 may have underlying intentions originating from those who wrote and published it. However, these intentions, explicit or not, are not particularly relevant. What is much more important is the meanings that the reader can find in the text within a specific context. For a prospective student, the strategy can be a demonstration of a future-oriented and ambitious university. For a stakeholder or investor, the strategy can be a demonstration of competent use of funding or a worthwhile partnership. In the context of global tendencies in higher education, the strategy may as well demonstrate that the University of Oulu is becoming a global university (for better or for worse). What is certain is that this remains to be determined and that the influence of 'authorial intent' is not particularly relevant for this thesis. Additionally, my observations on this text do not necessarily need to be accepted by others. My reading concerns the specific context of this thesis, and so does not need acceptance from, for example, the authors of the strategy. It does not make my observations more or less valid. What does, is the validity of my research methodology and the transparency of the research process.

Feature four might need some elaboration, as it is not the most transparent statement. It means that the meaning of a text says something about more than just the text itself. In this case the meanings or contents I derive from the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 will say something about the University of Oulu and my analytical framework. The text itself may be concerned with the University, or at least its future, but it definitely is not concerned with my analytical framework. However, the meanings derived from the text through my analysis will demonstrate something about my analysis and my framework. This also relates to features five and six. The meaning of the strategy will be different within my research context than within other stakeholders'. For example, the meaning of the strategy in my research is related to a global phenomenon, but not the possible usefulness of profitability of cooperation with the University of Oulu as a partner. Logically this means I must chose my own context and draw my own conclusions within my context. This context is my theoretical framework.

To summarize: using content analysis I can infer meanings from the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 within my own, chosen context. This context is the theoretical framework of the global university. My reading will not invalidate the readings of others', nor do their readings invalidate mine. This is important because it is not my aim to prove anyone right or wrong about the University of Oulu (or its strategy), but to examine the usefulness of the concept of a global university as a tool of analysis. The aim is not to provide 'useful' results, but valid, and if possible, replicable results or rather an analytical tool.

Lastly, I will not elaborate on my ontological assumptions beyond the absolutely necessary. I write my thesis from a social constructivist standpoint. In other words, I assume that an objective reality exists, but any meaning is created socially, by human interaction with others or reality itself. This ontology complements the chosen methodology, since I am not attempting to derive a singular, 'true', inherent meaning from my data. Instead I am trying to derive one of many possible meanings within one specific context from my data. The data itself is already a social construct, since institutional texts are never written by one person alone. The meaning I will infer from the text will also be a social construct, since it results from the interaction between myself and the product of others' intellectual labor. To conclude this short section, my ontological assumptions should be in accordance with my methodological choices and should not conflict with how I carry out my research. Additionally, given my ontological assumptions, my results will not have inherent meaning, as that meaning will depend on the reader of this thesis and their particular context.

3.2 Analytical method

The above section has aimed to make clear my choice of methodology. In this section I will explain how I aim to analyze the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020, making clear the specific goals and my analytical framework. I will also explain how I intend to apply content analysis in my study.

At the beginning of this thesis I established three research questions. The first two were addressed during the theoretical framework and literature review. The third question was split into two parts, in order to make it more concrete and realizable. In this section I will clarify how I will answer these two questions. The first was this: “How can I apply the (validated) characteristics in the analysis of the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020?” I will partly answer this question in this section of the thesis. Below I will make clear how I will attempt to apply the characteristics of the global university, which answers the above research questions in a theoretical sense. Of course, one goal of the analysis is to verify this theoretical idea. By applying my analytical framework I aim to assess the validity and practicality of it. Because I am using qualitative analysis, I cannot set any quantitative goals that my analysis must meet in order for the framework to be valid. Instead I will set some qualitative goals. First of all: can I meaningfully apply all characteristics to the text? If yes, how extensively? If no, is this a fault in the tool or due to an inherent aspect of the text? Second of all: when I apply the characteristics to the text, can I make meaningful conclusions about parts of the text? Last of all: can I apply the framework to the entirety of the text? Based on the answers to these questions, I will judge the validity and replicability of my analytical framework.

Onto the second questions: “What conclusion(s) can confidently be made about the University Strategy using the characteristics of the ‘global university’ as a tool of analysis?” To answer this question, my analysis will be problem-driven: it “derives from […] a desire to know something currently inaccessible and the belief that a systematic reading of potentially available texts could provide answers” (Krippendorff 2004, pp. 342-343). The so-called problem is to find out what one of the meanings is of the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 within a specific context. This context has been established in the theoretical framework as the notion of the global university. This is a more-or-less concrete notion proposed by Biesta (2011), which I further explored through a focused literature review. I established four characteristics which define a global university, and which already exist separately around the world in higher educational institutions.

Derived from this context I want to know to what extent the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 aims for the university to become a global university. This means I have to analyze the text based on the four characteristics I established in the theoretical framework. As Krippendorff (2013) specifies "Qualitative approaches to content analysis […] share the following characteristics:

- They require a close reading of relatively small amounts of textual matter.
- They involve the rearticulation (interpretation) of given texts into new (analytical, deconstructive, emancipatory, or critical) narratives accepted within particular scholarly communities that are sometimes opposed to positivist traditions of inquiry.
- The analysts acknowledge working within hermeneutic circles in which their own socially or culturally conditioned understandings constitutively participate. (For this reason, I refer to these approaches as interactive-hermeneutic, a description that speaks to the process of engaging in systematic interpretations of text.)" (p. 22)

For my analysis this means that I will examine the text carefully and closely and rearticulate certain parts of it through the lens of the global university. In other words, I will attempt to make clear a different meaning of the text by reframing it within the context of the global university-trend. Of course, this meaning will be applicable to the University Strategy first and only to the University of Oulu itself secondly. The text that I am using only constitutes a small part of the University's operations and institutions, but for the scope of this thesis the chosen text provides a more practical approach than an attempt to analyze the entire university. I will elaborate on this in the section on data below.

Last, but not least, the document also contains images in addition to text. In most cases this is limited to colored backgrounds and the insertion of (part) of the university logo. There are only 6 photographs in the document, the last of which is only a figure obscured by mist with the university slogan on top of it. I will attempt to include the graphical aspects of the document in my analysis as well, to the extent that this is possible or meaningful.

3.3 The four categories of the global university

In the theoretical framework I established four characteristics of the global university, based on Biesta's (2011) article *How useful should the university be?*. For clarity, I will repeat these characteristics here:

1. The university employs the term quality as a 'non-objectionable': A value and idea that is hard to argue against, but which is not or ill-defined when used. Other non-objectionables may also be used.
2. The university focuses on achieving or maintaining a certain position or ranking in league tables or comparative rankings. Specifically the use of a current ranking or aim to achieve a ranking as a defining characteristic of a university, and not as indicator or evaluation of specific practices within a university.
3. The university behaves or positions itself as a participant in the economy, becoming a competitor with other universities. Usefulness, profitability and being 'better than' become strategic aims of the university.
4. The university is a provider of goods and services for students. The relationship between the university and the student is transactional, not educational. The student becomes a customer and the university a competing business.

These characteristics are still broadly interpretable, but I will delineate what kind of concepts and ideas fit within each characteristic to some extent. I do this in order to avoid a framework that is too broad, and consequently less meaningful. On the other hand I will not create very strict categories either, as I would run the risk of creating a tool that is not applicable at all. I will discuss the characteristics one by one, and attempt to create four valid analytical categories. The first category will be the most complex, since a non-objectionable can be many things. To ensure validity, I will attempt to create a near-exhaustive list based on the findings from the literature review. The remaining categories will be simpler, since they are concerned with specifically defined concepts and ideas.

3.3.1 Quality and non-objectionables

What I consider a non-objectionable is based on the findings of the literature review. This obviously includes 'quality' since this is the concept I explored the most. There are many terms and concepts that are linked to quality, based on existing research. According Vidovich (2001) quality can be linked to excellent standards, quality assurance and quality improvement. Mok (2005) also mentions quality assurance. Deem-Mok & Lucas (2008) explored the idea of being 'world-class' as a vague concept. Last, but certainly not least, Becket & Brookes (2008) explored concepts and definitions of quality the most. Relating to quality assessment, they mention accountability, audit and assessment. With regards to quality enhancement, they mention empowerment, enthusiasm, expertise and excellence. Other definitions in their article link quality to being exceptional, consistency, fitness for purpose, value for money (which in turn is about efficiency and effectiveness), and transformation (meaning empowerment to take action and enhancement of customer satisfaction. Combined this forms a long list of terms and concepts.

It is possible that I will encounter a concept or idea in the text that I consider a non-objectionable, but has not been mentioned above. In this case I will attempt to demonstrate that the term or phrase is in fact non-objectionable. This would mean that I demonstrate the term or phrase is not defined within the text and is a desirable quality. If anything in the text points towards a definition or a delineated meaning of the used term or phrase, I will not consider it a non-objectionable.

To conclude, the analytical category can be defined as such:

A part of the text that includes the use of a non-objectionable. A non-objectionable is a desirable concept or idea that is not defined within the text. Non-objectionables may include or relate to the following: quality, quality improvement, quality assurance, excellent standards, accountability, assessment, audit, empowerment, enthusiasm, expertise, excellence, exceptional, consistency, fitness for purpose, value for money, efficiency, effectiveness, transformative, empowerment to take action, enhancement of customer satisfaction, and world-class. If a concept or idea from this list is defined within the text, it becomes an invalid reason to be included in this category.

3.3.2 University Rankings

The part of the text mentions the ranking position of the university, either as proof of being good or 'better-than', or as a goal post of the university. This may be invalid if the ranking is related to a specific strength or practice of the university. In this case, it must be demonstrated that part of the text relates more to the ranking position than to the practice of strength of the university.

3.3.3 The university as a participant in the market economy

The part of the text discusses an action or goal of the university which frames it as a participant in the market economy. Specifically, this is not an action or goal which relates solely to research or educational activities. The action or goal is linked to other businesses, economic activities or sources of income.

3.3.4 The university as a provider of goods and services for the customer-student

The part of the text frames the relationship between the university and the student as one between a business and a customer. This may happen through the mention of use of language of having or obtaining skills, degrees or credentials, as opposed to being a learner of being involved in a learning process. Additionally, the framing of university life as a lifestyle or in relation to a lifestyle is also included in this category.

3.3.5 Applying the categories

I will analyze and discuss the text based on each of the four categories, each corresponding to one of the characteristics of a global university. In order to maintain a structured analysis I will present my analysis per category. In the discussion of the analysis I will combine those findings into a meaningful whole. Based on this I will provide an answer to the two remaining research questions. To provide a clear overview of the different categories, I have summarized the above sections in the form of a table below:

Category	Clarification
Quality and non-objectionables	The use of the word quality, or similar words, which is used as a non-objectionable. This means the word is not clearly defined and presented as something desirable without motivation.
University Rankings	A focus on rankings as a means of positioning the university in relation to other universities without reference to the strengths of the university itself.
Participation in the market economy	Actions or goals which frame the university as participant in the market economy.
Provision of goods and services for the customer-student	The framing of the university-student relationship as a business-customer relationship. Language which focuses on having or obtaining credentials or university life as a lifestyle.

3.4 Data

The data I have chosen to analyze is the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020. The choice for this particular document is not accidental. First of all, it is the university I have studied at for two years. This period of time has led me to grow fond of this university, as well as sparked a certain interest in analyzing what this university is becoming. Second of all, the University of Oulu is, literally, located at the periphery of the world. Located in the North of Scandinavia the university is fairly isolated. At the same time there is a significant degree of internationalization at the University of Oulu: out of 13000 students, around 1700 are either exchange students or international degree students. Nearly 20% of staff are ‘from abroad’ according to the university’s website (“University figures” 2019). These facts combined with my own experiences lead me to believe that the University of Oulu is still grounded fairly strongly in its local geography while also being connected to global academia via staff and students, as well as national higher education policy. Because of this, it should be likely that both global and local tendencies are present in the university’s policies. This is important, because I want to avoid a situation where characteristics of the global university are either completely absent or overwhelmingly present.

The choice to analyze the strategy of the University of Oulu is also a practical one. A university is a very complex institution. It consists of many different parts: researchers, educators, students, student guilds, management, and so on. We cannot say that one part is more or less crucial as part of the identity of the University of Oulu. For this reason I have chosen a document that attempts to address the future of most of these aspects of the University of Oulu. The strategy of a university is not a demonstration of its identity at the moment of writing, but the desire and planning for a future version of the university. As a result I am not analyzing what the university is (at this moment), but rather what it is trying to become, based on the document that is the guideline or path towards this new version of the university. It is outside the scope of this thesis to determine whether or not everyone within the university complies and agrees with this strategy. It is also not possible to determine within the scope of this thesis whether the university is actually taking shape following the strategy. What my analysis can determine is what kind of university is desired by at least a part of the University of Oulu. Most importantly, what is desired by the managerial or leading parts of the University that created and published this strategy. The intention is to determine to what extent the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 is a roadmap towards creating a global university. This can be a starting point for further research into the phenomena of the global university in general or a more practical and analysis of the University of Oulu itself.

There are other limitations connected to the choice for this data. I am not analyzing any information found on the university website, even though some of it may be connected to the strategy itself. This choice is conscious and meant to avoid unconscious selectivity: the website of the University of Oulu is large and contains a lot of information about all aspects of the university. Because of this is it would be difficult to delineate which specific parts are relevant and which are not to the data I have chosen. If I make exceptions to this choice, it will only be in the discussion of the analysis. In addition to this I am also not exploring the origins of the document itself. Not because it would not be meaningful (on the contrary), but because it is beyond the scope of my research questions. I will touch on this topic again in the discussion with relation to possibilities for future research.

The aim is to make explicit the choices made in this strategy using the concept of the global university. The leadership of a university should not be allowed to present strategies as matter-of-fact, there is no alternative, all or nothing kind of policies. Strategies and policy are active and political choices, made within the context of a wider world. Those who manage and govern the University of Oulu obviously wield a lot of power in shaping the present and future of the university itself. Without a doubt, it is normal that the leadership of a university hold more power over the institution than those who come to attend its education for a limited time. However, this does not mean that those in positions of leadership are beyond criticism or accountability. If we consider every part of a university to be important for its identity and operations, then it is important to recognize that all parts of the university must be involved in its growth and setting its direction. To examine in what ways the University of Oulu might be becoming a global university is also a means to provide a way of understanding for those who are not part of the university leadership. If all members of the University of Oulu are to be involved in shaping the future of the university, everyone must also be able to understand what future those with the most power (i.e. the university leadership) have chosen for the university.

4 Analysis

As described above, I will discuss the strategy based on the four categories. This approach is deliberately qualitative. Because the proposed categories leave room for interpretation, it would prove difficult to delineate parts of text and isolate them as distinctly different from the other parts of the text. The Strategy contains many examples of long and syntactively complex sentences. This also demonstrated that breaking up the text based on the categories is not as simple as it would seem. As a result, I discuss characteristics found in the text per category. This allows me to analyze the text as a meaningful unit as a whole, but also to underline particular aspects and parts of this text.

4.1 Category 1: the use of non-objectionables

The University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 has quite a few occurrences of undefined, desirable ideals and qualities. The first of which is found on page 3 and 4. The Strategy proclaims that "at the University of Oulu we promote learning and carry out research that *pushes the boundaries of the known* [my emphasis]" (p. 4). Pushing the boundaries of the known definitely sounds like a noble and worthwhile endeavor. However, it is also extremely vague. That there is much that we do not yet know is beyond discussion. The 'boundaries of the known' can be interpreted in many different ways by many different people. There is some attempt at defining which boundaries are being pushed, but this remains fairly vague. The only attempt at defining these boundaries is what follows: "solving some of the greatest global challenges, including sustainable resource use, responsible business, human wellbeing and lifelong health, intelligent systems and services development, and harnessing environmental risks" (p. 4) This is mostly a definition in the sense that it explains what the goal is of "pushing the boundaries of the known" and not where those boundaries lie or in which academic fields the boundaries are being pushed. The strongest argument for this being a non-objectionable is that "pushing the boundaries of the known" is something nobody will object to. It is literally non-objectionable. No matter how well (or ill) defined it is, no one in the academic world will argue that there is nothing left to learn.

Following this we find this sentence: "The University's impact is based on excellence, high ambition and productivity in all our activities" (p. 4). Again, all of these are qualities that no one will object to. Excellence and (being) world-class are some of the non-objectionables that I found in the literature study. This whole paragraph is a description of the University of Oulu that is very desirable, but is not made concrete anywhere else in the text. “The impact that our 50 000 alumni have as well-educated citizens around the world” (p. 4) is certainly meant as a positive characteristic of the university, but it ignores the possibility that impact can be negative. I will discuss the use of ‘impact’ in the Strategy below, in a separate section, as it occurs fairly frequently in the text. Besides this, both high ambition and world-class innovation are used in this paragraph to describe the University of Oulu, but neither is defined anywhere in the text. Nobody will object to these being good characteristics to have, but it is also almost impossible to object, given that we do not know what exactly is meant by it.

More non-objectionables can be found on page 10. “We aim to build research environments with critical mass, high ambition and strong international networks.” What exactly is meant by critical mass and high ambition again remains unclear. It is arguable that ‘ambition’ is self-evident. Striving to be good or the best is desirable. But this strategy is meant to be a guiding document for the institution that is the University of Oulu. What is the ‘high ambition’ for? What must be achieved? What are these research environments striving for, concretely? Again, little can be argued against ambition, but at the same time should we not question what the goal is? Besides this, ‘critical mass’ is even vaguer. It is definitely desirable that a research environment produces results, and that it can maintain producing results. Yet again, who can object to this? The questions should be, what results are desired? The answer to this is “to recognize and develop new openings of international significance” (p. 10). What is internationally significant? The Strategy does not specify. This part of the text seems mostly to function as a desirable description of the university and its aims, but does not concretely define what is meant by it.

On page 11 the strategy defines the educational mission: “The overall aim is to further improve the quantitative and qualitative results and impact of education.” For now I will ignore ‘impact’ and discuss “quantitative and qualitative results”. The next two pages list the strategic aims to accomplish this mission. However, it does not go beyond ‘high quality’ to define what exactly is meant by “quantitative and qualitative results”. As will become clear in the discussion of the third category, pages 13 and 14 are mostly concerned with the economic benefits of studying at the University of Oulu. But in the end, the Strategy does not define or explain what is meant by that phrase. Improving results is always desirable, but what results are being improved is left vague. Yet again, the strategy employs non-objectionables to promote the University of Oulu.

Finally, on page 22, the last paragraph has several examples of non-objectionables. “In all of its operations, the University strives for excellent quality, high impact, performance and attractiveness.” *Excellent quality*, or simply *quality*, is the non-objectionable that Biesta uses in his article. In this text, it is not defined explicitly either. High impact, performance and attractiveness are also not defined. All of these qualities can be considered desirable, but without a concrete explanation of how this is accomplished and what exactly it is supposed to mean, there is not much to say. There is nothing to object to, because there is also nothing behind these words. This is underlined by the large text on page 21: “An attractive, dynamic environment with remarkable results”. The text explains who they try to attract: “top academic talent from all over the world” (p. 22). But what’s an attractive environment? This is not exactly explained in the strategy. “Dynamic” is also not defined. There is description of what the kind of workplace the University of Oulu wants to be, but it does not explicitly address what ‘dynamic’ is supposed to mean. Finally, what are “remarkable results” (p. 22)? Results can be remarkable for many reason, many of them are not positive. Of course it is implied that the results would be remarkable for a good reason, but this makes it a non-objectionable yet again. The explicit meaning is left out, and so there is nothing to object to.

The Strategy explains that “quality, impact and productivity are measured using the indicators set by the Ministry of Education and Culture in allocation of core funding from the government”. So ultimately, these three qualifiers are not defined in the text, but by another institution. All in all, quality and productivity are not mentioned very often in the Strategy itself.

However, ‘impact’ returns several times. First on page 4, when the impact of alumni students is mentioned. On the same page also as a descriptor of the University of Oulu itself: “a high impact university”. On page 11, the Strategy claims the aim of the educational mission is to “further improve the[…] impact of education.” Again on page 15: “We increase the impact of our research via a systematic approach to developing international networks with selected universities, supported by branch offices and liaison officers.” And lastly, on page 22: “the University strives for […] high impact”.

The University of Oulu wants to have a lot of impact, if the Strategy is to be believed. Unfortunately it is not easy to know what ‘impact’ means if we analyze only the Strategy itself. There is one part in the text, that I did not mention above, which seems to clarify to some extent what impact means. On page 18 it is explained that “we are dedicated to improving the interface between external stakeholders, companies and communities, and thereby building a bridge from discoveries to applications and impact for society." Impact in this sentence is a result from an improved connection between the University of Oulu and external parties. More importantly, making discoveries into applications is what impacts society. So now impact can be defined as the results of research reaching society in some practical way. It's not exactly specific, but it is not vague either. It tells us at least that the University of Oulu wants to change society in some way. There are plenty of examples of this in the Strategy, but these goals are never explicitly linked to 'impact'.

It's difficult to say if impact can truly be considered as a non-objectionable in this text. However, it still is not explicitly defined or linked to concrete aims. There are goals in the Strategy, but they are never explicitly mentioned alongside the word 'impact'. Anyone who reads the Strategy needs to infer the meaning of what 'impact' means, but some uncertainty remains, because who is to say this is exactly what it means.

Because 'impact' is one of the characteristics that is measured according to external indicators, I will not consider it a non-objectionable. Any person who wants to critique what impact the University of Oulu wants to have, can research the indicators set out by the Finnish government and use those in their critique. There is room for meaningful objection, which is not something that can be said about other parts of the same text. Further research could examine what the external indicators of the strategy are and if these could possibly be considered non-objectionables themselves.

This concludes the first category. There are several examples of non-objectionables in this text, but they are not present throughout the entirety of the Strategy. The implications of this will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.2 Global University Rankings

Surprisingly, the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 does not mention global rankings, or any rankings, at all. This is surprising, because the website of the University of Oulu dedicates an entire page to detailing its ranking according to four different systems ("University rankings" 2019). However, this page mentions no explicit desire or action on the part of the University to increase this rating. The page only mentions its position in relation to its self-declared strengths. While it was not my intention to include any part of the website in this analysis, in this particular case it indicated why there was no mention of rankings in the Strategy itself at all.

The closest the text comes to mentioning them is the use of words like 'world-class' (p. 4) and excellence (p. 4,10, 22). There is also a vague reference to competing with other universities on page 22: "To attract top academic talent from all over the world, the University of Oulu aims to be the best place to do research in its focus areas – and we let the world know about". Especially this last part implies that the University of Oulu wants to demonstrate in some way that it is better than other universities. However, this is not an explicit link to rankings.

As such, I cannot conclude that the University of Oulu considers achieving a certain rank in any kind of league table as a strategic aim. This concludes the second category.

4.3 Category 3: the university as economic participant

The first pages of the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 does not specifically mention anything economic. On page 4 "the sustainable use of our planet's resources" is mentioned, but there is no reference to economic activities. However, on page 8 sustainability is mentioned alongside "economic opportunities". After mentioning that "Finland aims to lead the way in the sustainable development of the Arctic region", the Strategy explains that the University of Oulu "will open up new emerging economic opportunities". After this specific areas of expertise are mentioned that will support this endeavor. This does not mean that the University of Oulu aims to be a participant in these economic opportunities, although it does not disprove this either. It does make clear that sustainable development is linked to economic activity, according to the Strategy. It mentions that "the effects of global warming are dramatic in the Arctic region and new logistics routes are opening up" (p. 8). This seems to imply that economic interest in the Arctic region is growing and already under way. The sustainable use of the resources in the region are mentioned alongside its inhabitants, culture and natural preservation. As a result there a double message is presented: more and more the resources in the Arctic region are becoming a point of interest, and seemingly inevitably these resources will be exploited at some point. At the same time, the Strategy argues that this exploitation will have to be sustainable, to protect the people, cultures and nature in the region. The strategy shows awareness of the fact that the Arctic region is vulnerable and must be protected to some extent, while at the same time it is adamant that economic exploitation of the resources in the region is unavoidable. This part of the Strategy seems to frame the University of Oulu as an important institution for both economic activity, and natural and cultural preservation of the region.

On page 10, the Strategy explains that “several of our infrastructures have the capacity to serve demanding national and international customers.” This explicitly frames the University of Oulu as an economic institution, which provides goods and services to customers. Just before this statement, a more specific goal is set up: “Emphasis is placed on pooling infrastructures into state-of-the-art service platforms.” While these statements could be easily overlooked in the text, they have serious implications. Firstly, the university’s resources and infrastructure are framed explicitly in relation to ‘customers’. This implies that the university is willing to become a business-like provider of goods and services, besides its scientific and educational goals. The use of the words ‘service platforms’ supports this. According to the Strategy the University of Oulu is aiming to sets itself up to become a provider of services and infrastructure to ‘customers’. This clearly demonstrates the intent to take on the role of a for-profit business in the market-economy.

A closer connection to business is also found on page 18, where “fostering collaboration with industries”, ‘’improving the interface between external stakeholders, companies and communities” and “a return on investment for innovation activities” is mentioned. It directly demonstrates the plan to cooperate with commercial businesses, but at the same time it does not point towards the University wanting to take on the role of a business itself.

On page 22, the Strategy points out that “a strong financial foundation is needed for sustainable operations.” Afterwards there is a mention of government funding, but no other mention as to what this “strong financial foundation” will consist of otherwise. Given the cited statements above, it seems that the University of Oulu does intend to generate income through its activities and cooperation with industries and businesses. Because of this sentence in the final paragraph of the Strategy, I would argue that the University of Oulu does intend to take on a more economic or commercial role than before. While a tighter connection with industry is motivated by the desire for more innovative research (p. 18), there is clearly also an intent to generate income through this connection.

On page 14 of the Strategy there is also a brief mention of “tuition fees for students outside the EU and EEA countries”. This is mentioned to clarify that this system will be “transparent” and that a grant system will be in place “to be encouraging”. Again, this could be easily overlooked in the context of economic or commercial activity, but it uncritically and explicitly states that tuition fees will be instated for a specific group of international students. While it is not explicitly stated, it is important to wonder if this is some form of commercial policy as well. Especially if we consider the phrase from page 22 again: "a strong financial foundation is needed for sustainable operations". Tuition fees may be one way to establish this 'financial foundation'. It is likely that the University of Oulu considers some of its international students as either a source of income or as a financial burden, which must be offset through tuition fees. Both possibilities imply that the institution's activities must generate income or, at the least, minimize its financial losses.

While the University's strategy does not discuss explicit economic or commercial activities at great length, the few mentions of demonstrate some intent to shift towards a more economic role than before. The University wishes to open economic opportunities in the Arctic region, to foster collaboration with businesses and to instate tuition fees for some of its students. It's not possible to claim that there is a strong commitment to becoming a major business or to strongly expand on these commercial activities, but the tendency towards becoming more commercial is hard to deny. Purely academic and educational activities are no longer the sole focus of the University of Oulu, based on its strategy. Purely academic and educational activities are no longer the sole focus of the University of Oulu, based on its strategy. Whether or not the University will carry out the intents demonstrated is a question for further research.

To conclude this category, it would be dishonest to claim that the University of Oulu is strongly committing towards becoming a profit generating business, but at the same time it is also moving away from being a purely academic and educational institution. Whether or not this plan will be carried out, and to what extent, must be examined in future research.

4.4 Category 4: the university as provider of educational goods and services

The shift from being an educational institution, where students enroll to take part in an educational process, to a provider of educational goods and services, where students invest to obtain credentials and gateways to economic opportunities, is not a large shift. Arguably it is also one that universities have little control over, as the public and private view on education influences this shift as well. As we will see, the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 demonstrates a future where the University of Oulu has undergone this shift as well, to some extent.

This is first noticeable on page 11, where the large text explains that the University of Oulu is "a unique environment for students from different disciplines to enjoy learning". First of all, the University is framed as a unique environment. While it is not specified why, the argument is made that the University of Oulu is distinctly different from all other universities. Second of all, learning is framed as something enjoyable. This is accompanied by a picture of a selfie-taking student participating in ice-hole swimming. The combination of these seem to point towards an attempt to frame learning at the University of Oulu as part of a fun and active lifestyle. Perhaps this interpretation is reading too far into a small part of the text, but at the same time the Strategy is clearly selling education at the University of Oulu as something not entirely related to learning. This is supported by another point of pride on page 13: "Customer-oriented, efficient student services and learning support tools enable the student to concentrate fully on the joy of learning." Learning is a joy, according to this Strategy, ignoring the reality that learning is not always easy or fun. More importantly, this sentence demonstrates a much more significant shift, aside from joyful learning.

It becomes distinctly noticeable that University of Oulu will become a provider of educational goods. As can be noted in the sentence cited above, the University of Oulu boasts "customer-oriented, efficient student services". Students are explicitly referred to as customers. Students are purchasing education at the University of Oulu. On page 13 the Strategy clarifies that the University's "programs attract students who value the competence they are acquiring". As noted by Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion (2009) this kind of language indicates a shift towards the obtaining of a credential or degree, rather than an involvement in a learning process. This supports my observation above, that students are considered customers, people who have come to the University of Oulu to acquire something specific and whose needs must be satisfied. On page 14 there is more support for this framing. The Strategy explains that the University "educate[s] competent experts capable of creating successful, lifelong careers in the dynamic work market". In other words, the value of education at the University of Oulu rests in economic success after the completion of studies. On page 18 this is mentioned as well: "The University of Oulu advances economic wellbeing". The goal of a good economic future is directly linked to studying the University. Moreover, the Strategy explicitly states that "the development of degree programs is competency-based and the results of systematic career path follow ups are used in curriculum revision." So education at the University of Oulu is economically advantageous, but the education is also reformed according to what is economically viable and successful. Studies are specifically structured around the economic future of the student, instead of around educational or academic needs.

Academic activities at the University of Oulu are also explicitly linked to being economically active on page 18 because the University “aim[s] to combine academic expertise and entrepreneurial spirit, both in education and in research.” On page 17 the large text also exclaims the University will be “fostering research-based innovation and start-up culture”. So, studying at the University of Oulu will become supported as an economic activity in and of itself.

The University of Oulu is also competing for students, as the Strategy spends an entire paragraph selling itself as a favorable choice for prospective students. The University boasts “pedagogically skillful staff” and creates “an inspiring studying atmosphere”. They “support activities” and “facilities [that] match the needs of a diverse student population.” These are all admirable characteristics of a good university, but following the statements noted above, it is difficult not to interpret it as an attempt to frame the University of Oulu as a favorable choice among many universities. The language of choice is also found on page 15, where an aim to offer “a larger selection of studies” is mentioned. A larger selection of studies would also mean attracting more students.

On page 14, international students are also mentioned. Noteworthy is the fact that they are mentioned in relation to tuition fees. Given that education is free in Finland, this makes the relationship between the University of Oulu and non EU-students suddenly very transactional. There is “grant system” that “will be built to be encouraging”, but the fact remains that there is a transaction taking place, and as with any transaction, the paying party will have certain expectations of the received goods and services. The fact that tuition is only demanded of non-EU students also raises questions about the attitude of the University of Oulu towards this particular subsection of international students. Does the University of Oulu consider these students more as a budgetary resource, rather than actual students? Or are they considered such a burden that tuition fees are absolutely necessary to offset possible costs? Unfortunately it is not possible to answer these questions within the scope of this thesis, but they are important questions nonetheless.

The end of the Strategy is possibly the best summary for this category, as the document explains that “attractiveness will be measured by how we succeed in student admissions, talent recruitment and partnering.” The University of Oulu aims to be ‘attractive’, meaning that it wants to attract as many students as possible. This frames the University as a competitor for student bodies. The Strategy clearly demonstrates that the University of Oulu aims to profile itself as an advantageous choice in the market of universities. Studies at this University will be economically advantageous, fun, and customer-oriented.

4.5 Other characteristics

Since the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020 also contains a lot of content that cannot explicitly be classified in the four categories of the global university, it is necessary to discuss some other characteristics of the text. I will analyze some noteworthy aspects of the text and what they implicate in the context of my analysis.

First of all, I will address the motto of the University of Oulu: "Science *with* Arctic Attitude" (p.1). This motto could be interpreted as somewhat vague and open to interpretation, but the text defines this phrase quite concretely. On page 4 it is explained that "the demanding conditions of the far north have always forced people to be inventive and resourceful. Many innovations that have changed the world have their roots here." The phrase is thus more or less defined as inventiveness, resourcefulness and innovation driven by the extreme conditions of the northern climate. In contrast to some of the findings in category 1, this is a concrete and defining identity of the University. Whether or not the reality corresponds to this Strategy, the University of Oulu wishes for its identity to remain rooted in the local history and geography.

In connection to this, it is important to discuss the visual aspects of this document. Page 7 is the only picture (besides the monochrome backgrounds on some pages) that does not depict a person or persons. On page 2, 23 and 24, the focus seems to be on one aspect of the local climate: the long, cold winters. The picture on page 11 and 12 was already discussed in relation to category 4. It's similar to the pictures on page 2, 23 and 24, given that ice swimming is only possible during cold and freezing winters. However, it also depicts an action and emotion of a person. This puts it into connection with the pictures on page 16, 19 and 20, which depict students sitting together conversing or collaborating. The picture seem connected mostly to parts of the text which refer to student facilities at the University of Oulu. Not much meaning can be derived from these pictures, since they are not explicitly linked to the text, nor do they depict any meaningful actions. For the most part, the pictures on page 11, 12, 16, 19 and 20 are very similar in nature: they depict the University of Oulu as a place where students can meet, discuss and work together. The remaining pictures underline the University's geographical location: the north of Scandinavia. This implies that the University's identity is still local: it visually emphasizes the most notable aspect of the local climate.

It must also be noted that the Strategy has also several concrete and meaningful descriptions of the University's activities and strengths. Page 6 describes the five focus areas of the University of Oulu. There is a clear description of concrete activities and aims that the University wishes to continue or achieve. While sentences like "we connect expertise to produce intelligent solutions" might be considered somewhat commercial, they are accompanied by very real examples of academic activities. In this case "fundamental materials science, to the production and use of superior materials and (bio)catalytic systems, concepts of bio and circular economies, cleantech, and ICT and open data solutions."

On page 8, the Strategy continues to profile the University of Oulu using local opportunities and challenges. And on page 10, the text describes a definite aim towards supporting the strengths of the University using HR and recruitment. While there is much to be said about the University's partnerships, there are clear aims to improve the University's academic and research activities through cooperation with other academic institutions. Page 15 describes several specific reasons for the University to collaborate and share infrastructure.

It's necessary to note that many parts of the Strategy are not related specifically to any of the four categories that make up the concept of a Global University. In most cases this does not contradict anything that I have noted in relation to those categories, but it demonstrates that several discourses are present in the Strategy. Analyzing or discovering what inspired the contents of this document are far beyond the scope of this thesis, but it could provide a useful perspective on why and how the University of Oulu's current goals came to be.

5 Discussion

5.1 The Global University of Oulu?

First of all, let's consider the full picture. Based solely on the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020, it is safe to conclude that the University of Oulu is not a global university. Given that category 2 is completely absent from the document, it would be false to say that this Strategy is intended to transform the University of Oulu into a global university. On the other hand, the three other categories are definitely present within the text. The weakest of these three is category 3, the university as participant in the market-economy. Both category 1, the use of non-objectionables, and category 4, provider of educational goods and services, are very noticeable in this text. As a result, we can conclude to some extent that the University of Oulu is changing towards something that more closely resembles the global university, but is definitely not going to be a global university fully. While change is occurring, it still seems possible that the University of Oulu might change course or deviate from these global trends.

It is clear that the University of Oulu displays several aspects of a Global University. While the non-objectionables in the text are not 'quality', as Biesta uses as a main point in his article, there is a clear similarity to how those non-objectionables are employed. These terms are used to promote a particular vision of the University of Oulu, which make it more difficult to disagree with that vision. The non-objectionables are vaguely desirable, since the words themselves represent generally good concepts, but because they are not concretized, there is nothing to object to either. The University says it strives for knowing more, excellence, ambition, innovation, and even excellent quality. All of these are hard to disagree with, but they are simultaneously not connected to concrete aims or goals. These are all things that any university strives to achieve. But they ring somewhat hollow because of this. While the University of Oulu claims uniqueness ("University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020" 2016), the use of these non-objectionables make the University become part of the Global University trend, rather than the opposite.

To some degree, I must admit, it is likely that the Strategy contains quite a few non-objectionables because this is a text that also serves marketing purposes. Making anything marketable will involve the use of empty but positive phrases and words. Perhaps it is a step too far to conclude that this characteristic is fully present in the text because of this. At the same time, this text also functions as a vision towards the future for the University of Oulu. It would be neglectful to ignore the presence of non-objectionables in this kind of document. If the University wishes to define itself uniquely, it would need to consciously work on using defined and concrete goals and objectives. Not only will it make the University of Oulu more distinguishable, but it would support the unique identity it clearly wants to establish as well.

In my analysis I also discuss the use of the word 'impact' in the Strategy. While I concluded the use of this word could not be considered a non-objectionable, I would like to elaborate more on this. Impact, as mentioned in the text, is evaluated using external indicators, according to the text. These external indicators are not defined within the text itself. Unfortunately the document does also lack a reference to where these indicators can be found. This information also does not seem to be available on the website. While I do not doubt that these indicators exist and are used to evaluate the University of Oulu, it does call into question why this information is mentioned in the Strategy. It is mentioned in relation to how funding is allocated, in a paragraph about quality management. While I'm reluctant to classify this phrase as a non-objectionable, it is used in exactly the same manner as a non-objectionable: to justify decisions and policy. There is no mention of what these indicators mean for the university in practical terms. It also deflects criticism preemptively: The institution can hardly be held responsible for actions dictated by external indicators, because it did not decide on those indicators. On the other hand it could also have been mentioned to reassure certain readers: we are responsible and hold ourselves to the standards set by the government. But since they fail to mention or reference those standards explicitly, the reader has to take the Strategy at face value. As Biesta (2011) points out, this is not presented as inevitable, but "as not involving any choice" (p. 36). In a sense, mentioning external indicators are justification for choices (or the lack of), may itself be a minor characteristic of a global university.

The fact that the University Strategy fully embraces the relationship between university and students as business and customer also detracts from the more local identity of the University. The Strategy displays a strong will to enter the market of universities and compete with other higher education institutions. Ironically, the University of Oulu becomes less of a unique option in higher education because of this, as Biesta points out (2011, p. 38). The University becomes more alike to other universities around the world by embracing this shift in higher education. Instead of being an institute of learning and research, a shift has started towards becoming a provider of educational goods and services, a higher education supermarket, where students come to shop for pathways toward economically viable careers. For some international students, studying at the University of Oulu already is a literal transaction. Given that the Strategy expressly lays out this future for the University of Oulu, it is likely this shift will continue towards the future.

Lastly, the University of Oulu demonstrates some intent to become a direct participant in economic activities. Closer ties to businesses and wanting to create economic opportunities for partners and students alike supports this conclusion. The University is placing emphasis on economic goals with regards to research. The University clearly also wants to meet the needs of society, but business seems to be equally important to center research and infrastructure around. However, this is characteristic is clearly not as strongly present as the two discussed above. The Strategy shows a conscious vision on improving research in fields that the University of Oulu is strong in, without needing to motivate this with financial of economic arguments. I would argue there is still an academic vision present in the Strategy, besides a business and financial one.

Considering all of this, I would not call the University of Oulu a Global University. There is clear evidence of characteristics of the Global University in the University Strategy, which indicates that the University of Oulu is not immune to this global trend. Policymakers and leaders at the University Of Oulu might need to carefully examine the presence of these trends in their vision of the University, because it might undermine the very thing they are trying to achieve: a unique and successful University of Oulu. There is still a discernible identity present in the Strategy that is centered around the location in Northern Scandinavia. While the University is not truly Arctic (it is located south of the Polar circle), the Strategy clearly derives a sense of identity from the University's geography. It is also keenly aware of its own strengths and highlights these directly in the text. Given that there is no reference to rankings, the University Strategy is not yet focused blindly on out-performing other universities in one way or another, but will this stay this way? As I noted in the analysis, the university website dedicates a page to describing its position on several ranking lists. The fact that rankings are not mentioned in the strategy does not mean the University of Oulu is not concerned with it. This Strategy demonstrates that the University of Oulu still has a multitude of possible futures ahead of it. Avoiding the homogeneity of being a Global University is definitely still possible, but if future policymakers of the University keep focusing on the present characteristics, the Global University of Oulu may become a reality.

5.2 Implications

Biesta's (2011) article, which this thesis is largely based on, considers whether the rise of the global university is "another dimension of the crisis in higher education" (p. 45). As Biesta points out, the global university, or the modus operandi it represents, is rather insidious. Not because it is some kind of hidden, global conspiracy, but rather because it is more like an underlying, unconscious logic. Biesta (2011) claims it is driven by fear (p.45). The fear to be worse than other universities, to not rank highly, to fall behind in the race to excellence.

The University of Oulu Strategy (2016) seems to follow this logic to some extent. It desires to be world-class, excellent and impactful. The university knows its strengths, but desires to go beyond that. It assumes the role as competitor in the market of higher education. Especially in the language surrounding the university's relationship to its students, we can notice the desire to be a 'useful' university. In this sense the global university logic is most clear in the Strategy. The University of Oulu wants to provide degrees, opportunities and future careers to students, much rather than education. There is a sense that students must be drawn to the University of Oulu because they will obtain something useful and become successful, rather than that they will learn, be challenged or grow as a person. The biggest danger in this logic is that the spirit of education may be lost or corrupted unwittingly. A university education slowly changes into a checklist of requirements to obtain the key to a career or possible futures, instead of being a time for learning and challenging what we assume to be true.

In this sense, the more the logic of the global university becomes prevalent, the harder it becomes to challenge that logic. If we frame education in a discourse of usefulness then slowly but surely it will become unreasonable to claim that education is more than its practical use. Tuition fees enforce this logic as well: for a subset of international students an education at the University of Oulu must be useful to them in some sense. Why else would you pay a tuition fee to attend a university in such a remote place? Tuition fees require that education has a return on investment in very tangible ways.

Another important aspect of the global university is the role of national and international higher education policy. The University of Oulu Strategy mentions external indicators, as I have extensively discussed already, but there is an implication which has been left open. While the University leadership might use these external indicators to justify its choices (or lack thereof), it is also possible that they truly believe they have no choice in these matters. It is telling that on the website, those in charge of the University of Oulu refer to themselves as "University

Management" ("University management" 2020), instead of University Leadership. What if those in charge truly believe they are not there to lead the University of Oulu, but only to manage it on the direction set by the government and other overarching institutions?

Biesta considers how we can resist the rise of the global university and its underlying logic (2011, p. 46). He suggests small gestures first and foremost, but in the case of the University of Oulu, I suggest that there are other ways to resist this change. Given that those in charge do not refer to themselves as leadership, there is a need to reclaim that role. Leadership is never absent, whether it is located with the 'management' or higher education policy and those who determine those policies, but perhaps in the case of the University of Oulu, it is unclaimed. This presents an opportunity to those parts of the university I have conveniently throughout this thesis. As I have pointed out before, a university is much more than its strategy. It is also its students, staff, unions, and so on. If the rise of the global university is to be resisted, perhaps it is up to those whose education and research is at risk to reclaim leadership over the university. This is not to say this could be easy or even pleasant, but it might be necessary.

5.3 Limitations

The conclusions I have drawn so far have been based on my analysis of the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020. As I have explained the choice for this strongly delineated piece of the university was conscious and mostly practical. This also forms the biggest limitation for the research I have carried out.

Firstly, it is important to point out that the Strategy might not represent the actual position of many people (even those in charge) at the University of Oulu. I have attempted not to single out people or groups in this text as a result of this. At the same time, it is not unreasonable to assume that this text was approved by those in charge. It functions as a document for everyone who wants to know what the University of Oulu stands for, meaning that those in charge must have made decisions on what was to be included and what was not. This does not mean that the Strategy is not representative of the university as a whole, regarding both policies and practices. If we are to determine whether the university is truly becoming a global university, there is need for further research to examine the actual policies and changes at the University of Oulu.

Secondly, I did not examine how this Strategy was formulated. Was it actually based on external policies? To what extent? Again there is need for further research to examine how this document is written and by whom? Only then can we draw strong conclusions based on its analysis.

Thirdly, I did not compare this strategy to older strategies. I cannot claim that the University of Oulu used to be different, or that its strategy has changed over time. Perhaps the strategy has always contained the same elements, however unlikely that may be. A comparative study of the different strategies over time may lead to many more useful insights in how the University of Oulu has changed, or how those in charge of the university have envisioned its future differently over time.

Lastly, I did not compare this document to other documents and resources about the University of Oulu. With the exception of the website's mention about university rankings, this forms another blind spot in my research. Do other documentation and policy documents present a different picture of the University of Oulu?

To conclude somewhat more positively, I think analysis of the strategy of a university is meaningful, despite the above limitations. A strategy presents us with a concentrated vision about a university. It represents a path to the future laid out by some of those in charge at a university and gives an opportunity to see what is ahead in terms of policy. In conjunction with a broader approach, such an analysis could prove extremely insightful in where a university is heading, regardless of whether the researcher agrees with that direction.

5.4 Is this methodology 'useful'?

The methodology I have applied in this thesis has many limitations, as I have demonstrated above. However, this does not need to mean that it is not useful or meaningful. I would argue that analyzing university strategies in the context of the global university logic is extremely meaningful and even useful. As I have argued in the previous section, a strategy gives us an idea of the direction of a university, as envisioned by at least some part of its leadership. Given the implication of the global university logic, it is important that staff and students are aware of its presence in their university. After all, you cannot resist that which you do not know exists.

It is also possible to questions whether resisting the rise of global universities is meaningful? This could depend on a person's vision of education. However, Biesta makes an important point in this regard: "if the university only gives what it is asked to give, it ceases to have a reason to exist" (2011, p. 44). I would argue that if a university fully employs the global university logic, it ceases to be a university, at least as we know it. If research is no longer about challenging what is known, or discovery, but about profitability and generating economic opportunities, is it still research? If attending university is simply about obtaining certification, and not about learning, is it still education? Reducing a university to usefulness may be the undoing of the university as a whole. That is why this methodology is meaningful, as well as useful. If we want to resist the rise of the global university, we must know what is ahead, and act accordingly. Considering this, it is definitely useful to examine a university strategy using my method. It can tell us where a university if headed and what lays ahead for those who disagree with that direction. I will not claim this approach predicts the future in some way, but if an institution tells you where it wants to go, perhaps it is a good idea to examine what exactly the destination is.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, I have reached more or less satisfying answers to my research aims. The global university is a concept that is grounded in reality, as demonstrated by research from around the globe. It is also possible to apply this concept as an analytical tool. However, making conclusion about the University of Oulu has been more difficult. My research was extremely limited due to the data I have chosen. While I can make claims about the direction and characteristics of the University of Oulu, it is difficult for me to claim I can make undeniable conclusions.

This is not a failure of my research. My most important aim was not analyze the University of Oulu, but to apply the concept of the global university as an analytical tool. I believe this has been successful. At the same, there is a lot of room for improvement. Future research should choose for a wider range of data. This could include information from the website of a university. However, in some cases the strategy of a university is a much more extensive document than the one I studied. To make valid claims about a university using this methodology, would require a careful selection of varied and relevant documentation in addition to studying the behaviors and perspectives of the different actors at that university. It is easy to forget the human factor when analyzing or studying an institution.

To the extent that I can make claims about the University of Oulu, it has become clear that the university is, in some ways, becoming more like a global university. In several ways the strategy demonstrates a will to behave like a global university. The question then becomes: what can be done about this? What are options for those who do not agree with this direction for the university? This an important question that will hopefully be answered in future research. It is not hard to imagine that the University of Oulu will continue in this direction if it meets no resistance.

Despite the noticeable trend in the University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020, my hopes are that this is not an unchangeable course. I believe there are possibilities to resist this change towards ‘usefulness’. However, it will require considerable effort by many different members of the university. Given the global nature of the global university, the pressure for the University of Oulu to follow this trend will only grow. I hope that this thesis can contribute at least in a minor way to changing the course of this university.

7 References

Becket, N., & Brookes, M. (2008). Quality Management Practice in Higher Education - What Quality Are We Actually Enhancing? *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education 7 (1)*, 40–54.

Biesta, G. (2010). *Good Education in an Age of Measurement: Ethics, Politics, Democracy*. New York: Routledge.

Biesta, G. (2011). How Useful Should the University Be? On the Rise of the Global University and the Crisis in Higher Education. *Qui Parle 20 (1)*, 35–47.

Byun, K., Jon, J.-E., & Kim, D. (2013). Quest for building world-class universities in South Korea: outcomes and consequences. *Higher Education 58 (5)*, 645–659.

Connell, C. O. (2015). Close-Up Examination of Discourses Associated with Global University Rankings: Counter-Narratives in UK Policy Context. *Higher Education Quarterly 69 (3)*, 279–294.

Deem, R., Mok, K. H., & Lucas, L. (2008). Transforming Higher Education in Whose Image? Exploring the Concept of the 'World-Class' University in Europe and Asia. *Higher Education Policy 21*, 83–97.

Finland: Higher Education Funding. (2020, January). European Commission. Retrieved from https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/higher-education-funding-25_en

Foucault, M. (2002). *Michel Foucault - Power - Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984 Volume Three*. (J. D. Faubion, Ed.). London: Penguin Group.

Gupta, T. (2018). The Marketization of Higher Education. *Journal of Recent Research Aspects 5 (3)*, 1–8.

Hazelkorn, E. (2014). Rankings and the Global Reputation Race. *New Directions for Higher Education 2014*, 13–26.

Kauppinen, I., & Kaidesoja, T. (2014). A Shift Towards Academic Capitalism in Finland. *Higher Education Policy 27*, 23–41.

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: an introduction to its methodology* (Second Edition.). London: Sage Publications.

Krippendorff, K. (2013). *Content Analysis: An Introductions to its Methodology*. London: Sage Publications.

Lim, M. A., & Oerberg, J. W. (2017). Active Instruments: On The Use of University Rankings in Developing National Systems of Higher Education. *Policy Review in Higher Education* 91–108.

Marginson, S. (2007). Global University Rankings: Implications in general and for Australia. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management 29 (2)*, 131–142.

Miller, B. (2010). Skills for sale: what is being commodified in higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education 24 (3)*, 199–206.

Mok, K.-H. (2005). The quest for world class university Quality assurance and international benchmarking in Hong Kong. *Quality Assurance in Education 13 (4)*, 277–304.

Molesworth, M., Nixon, E., & Scullion, R. (2009). Having, being and higher education: the marketisation of the university and the transformation of the student into consumer. *Teaching in Higher Education 14 (3)*, 277–287.

Munene, I. I. (2008). Privatising the public: marketisation as a strategy in public university transformation. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education 13 (1)*, 1–17.

Naidoo, R. (2003). Repositining Higher Education as a Global Commodity: Opportunities and challenges for future sociology of education work. *British Journal of Sociology of Education 24 (2)*, 249–259.

Parker, L. D. (2012). From Privatised to Hybrid Corporatised Higher Education: A Global Financial Management Discourse. *Financial Accountability & Management 28 (3)*, 247–268.

Rhoades, G., & Sporn, B. (2002). Quality assurance in Europe and the U.S.: Professional and political economic framing of higher education policy. *Higher Education 43*, 355–390.

Saarinen, T. (2005). Quality' in the Bologna Process: from 'competitive edge' to quality assurance techniques. *European Journal of Education 40 (2)*, 189–204.

Saarinen, T. (2007). *Quality on the Move Discursive Construction of Higher Education Policy from the Perspective of Quality*. University of Jyväskylä.

Sanoff, A. P., Usher, A., Savino, M., & Clarke, M. (2007). *College and University Ranking Systems - Global Perspectives and American Challenges*. (J. P. Merisotis, A. F. Cunningham, A. M. Kee, T. T. Gordon, & L. H. Leegwater, Eds.). Washington D.C.: Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Scholarships and Fees. (2019, December). University of Oulu. Retrieved on 20 April 2020 from https://www.oulu.fi/university/masters/scholarships

Slaughter, S., & Cantwell, B. (2012). Transatlantic moves to the market: the United States and the European Union. *Higher Education 63*, 583–606.

Tomlinson, M. (2016). The Impact of Market-Driven Higher Education on Student-University Relations: Investing, Consuming and Competing. *Higher Education Policy 29*, 149–166.

University figures. (2019). University of Oulu. Retrieved on 15 April 2020 from https://www.oulu.fi/university/university-figures

University management. (2020, January). University of Oulu. Retrieved on 30 April 2020 from https://www.oulu.fi/university/node/35084

University of Oulu Strategy 2016-2020. (2016). University of Oulu. Retrieved on 26 April 2017 from https://www.oulu.fi/sites/default/files/content/University%20of%20Oulu%20Strategy%202016-2020.pdf

University rankings. (2019). University of Oulu. Retrieved on 30 April 2020 from https://www.oulu.fi/university/node/43234

Vidovich, L. (2001). That Chameleon ’Quality’: the multiple and contradictory discourses of ’quality’ policy in Australian higher education. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education 22 (2)*, 249–261.

Wangenge-Ouma, G. (2008). Higher education marketisation and its discontents: the case of quality in Kenya. *Higher Education 56*, 457–471.

Zhang, Y., & O’Halloran, K. L. (2013). Towards a global knowledge enterprise’: university websites as portals to the ongoing marketization of higher education. *Critical Discourse Studies 10 (4)*, 468–485.